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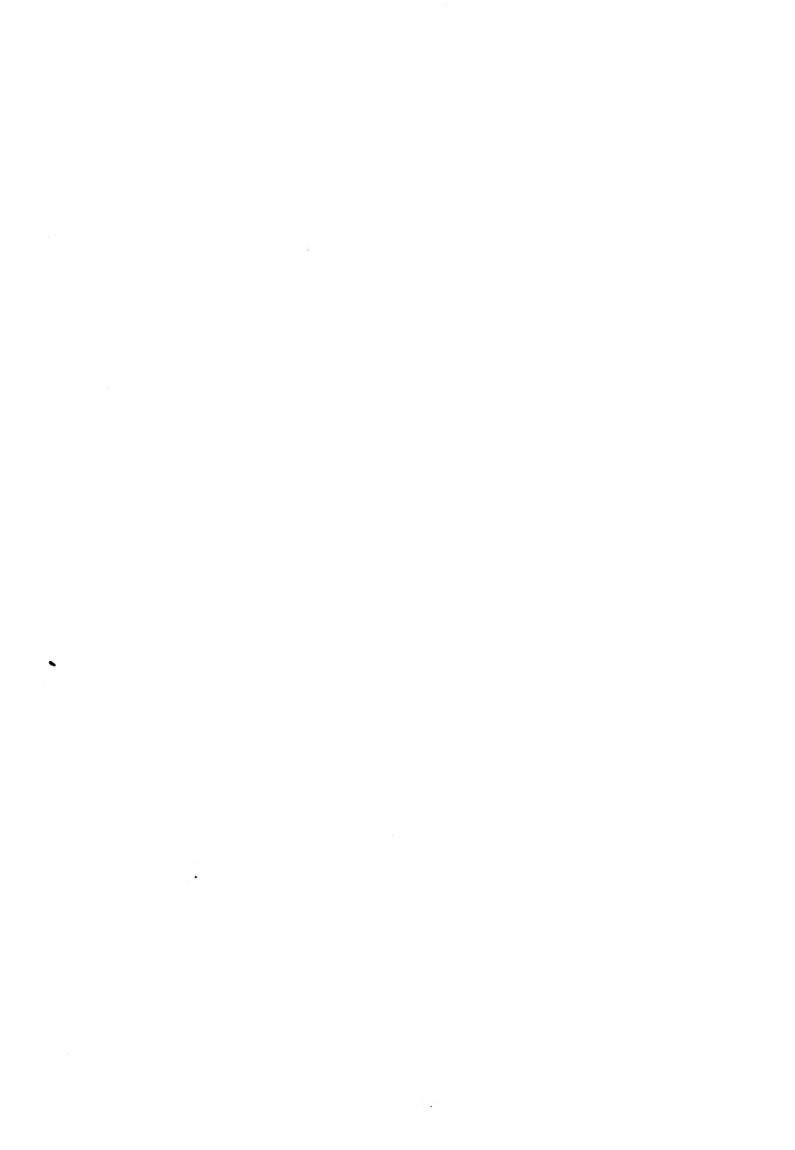
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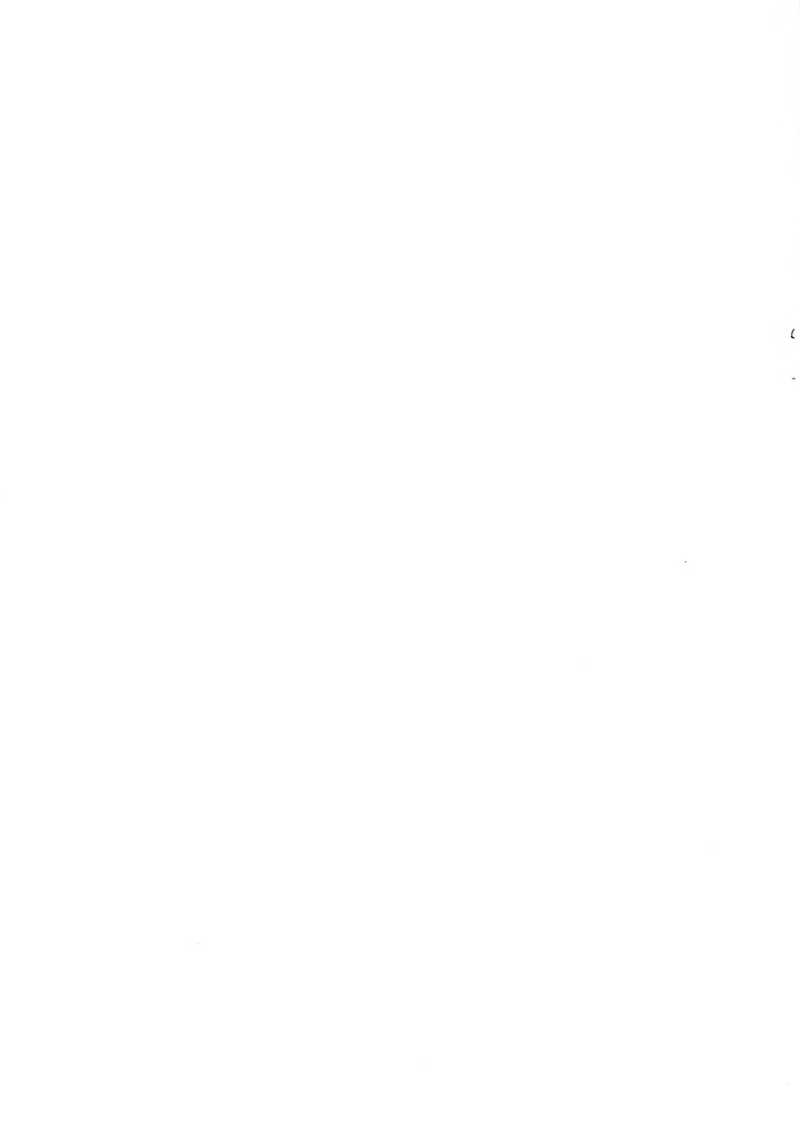
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MATTHEW ARNOLD'S  
SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

*"The tale of tears derived from minstrel old."*

EDITED BY  
LOUISE MANNING HODGKINS,  
WELLESLEY COLLEGE.



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## PREFACE.

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THE object of this book is to familiarize the American student with a noble portion of one of the least known of the great epics, and to invite a more thorough appreciation of the simple classic verse of a poet whose hold upon us has been chiefly maintained through his ability to influence modern thought and to illustrate modern life. No worker can maintain acknowledged superiority in one line without manifest danger that his efforts out of that line become unheeded. "Sohrab and Rustum," an instance of Mr. Arnold's finest poetical idealism, is a case in point.

In submitting this little work to the public, the author would acknowledge her indebtedness to the French version of Professor Mohl, and the English translations of Mr. Atkinson and Miss Zimmern. The thanks of the editor are due Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin and Co., for the use of Miss Thomas's poem.

LOUISE MANNING HODGKINS.

WELLESLEY COLLEGE, October, 1890.





## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

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INTERESTING DATES IN THE LIFE OF ARNOLD . . . .	1
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH . . . . .	3
FAMOUS EPISODES OF THE SHAH NAMEH . . . . .	11
THE SHAH NAMEH . . . . .	12
THE STORY OF SOHRAB AND RUSTUM . . . . .	16
ARNOLD'S SOHRAB AND RUSTUM . . . . .	19
AFTER READING ARNOLD'S SOHRAB AND RUSTUM . . .	24
SOHRAB AND RUSTUM. AN EPISODE . . . . .	25
INTRODUCTION TO THE NOTES . . . . .	57
NOTES . . . . .	59



## INTERESTING DATES IN THE LIFE OF MATTHEW ARNOLD.

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PUBLIC-SCHOOL LIFE AT WINCHESTER AND RUGBY, 1836-40.

UNIVERSITY LIFE AT OXFORD, 1841-45.

WINNING OF NEWDIGATE PRIZE, 1843.

FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE, 1845.

PRIVATE SECRETARY TO LORD LANSDOWNE, 1847-51.

PUBLICATION OF "A STRAYED REVELLER, AND OTHER POEMS,"  
1848.

INSPECTOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1851-86.

MARRIAGE TO MISS WIGHTMAN, 1851.

PUBLICATION OF "EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA, AND OTHER POEMS,"  
1853.

PROFESSOR OF POETRY AT OXFORD, 1857-67.

PUBLICATION OF LECTURES ON TRANSLATING HOMER, 1859.

FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE CONTINENT IN THE INTERESTS  
OF EDUCATION, 1859-60.

REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS OF FRANCE, GERMANY,  
HOLLAND, 1861.

PUBLICATION OF "ESSAYS IN CRITICISM," 1865.

SECOND OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE CONTINENT IN THE INTERESTS  
OF EDUCATION, 1865.

PUBLICATION OF "CULTURE AND ANARCHY," 1869.

DEGREE OF LL.D., UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, 1869.

DEGREE OF LL.D., UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, 1870.

PUBLICATION OF "ST. PAUL AND PROTESTANTISM," 1870.

PUBLICATION OF "LITERATURE AND DOGMA," 1873.

DEGREE OF LL.D., UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, 1880.

PUBLICATION OF "IRISH ESSAYS AND LITERATURE AND  
SCIENCE," 1882.

LECTURE TOUR IN THE UNITED STATES, 1884.

PUBLICATION OF "DISCOURSES ON AMERICA," 1885.

THIRD OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE CONTINENT IN THE INTERESTS  
OF EDUCATION, 1885.

NOTE. — Matthew Arnold published his poems over the letter "A" until  
1854.

# MATTHEW ARNOLD.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

It is rarely that the son of a great man attains greatness. An exception is instanced in the son of Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby.

Matthew Arnold, the eldest son of the famous master, was born at Laleham, Middlesex County, England, Dec. 24, 1822. His preparation for college was begun in his native village under the Rev. J. Buckland, master of a private school; continued under Dr. Moberly at Winchester, and completed with his "fervent, heroic, and good" father at Rugby. It is interesting to note that the man who waged a ceaseless, noble war against bad diction is reported by his schoolfellows to have been well versed and practised in the curious Winchester vocabulary familiar to all acquainted with the classical school founded by William of Wykeham. That he was scarcely a popular boy is evidenced by the fact, that, to use one of those Winchester phrases, he was once "cloister-peeled" (pelted with bread-pellets), and otherwise socially ostracised by his mates, until his true manly spirit and undeniable triumphs in rhetoricals quite won over his youthful opponents.

It is doubtful if the public-school system was adapted to him, and Dr. Arnold may have had his own son in mind when he wrote to Coleridge: "But my deliberate conviction is stronger and stronger, that all this system is wholly wrong for the greater number of boys. Those who have talents, and natural taste and fondness for poetry, find the poetry lessons very useful; the mass do not feel one tittle about the matter, and, I speak advisedly, do not, in my belief, benefit from them one grain."

Later at Rugby, he won the Balliol Open Scholarship, and in his first academic year at Oxford a second scholarship for excellence in Latin. During his university course he took several prizes, the Newdigate being the most significant; and just thirty years after a similar honor had been conferred upon his father, he was elected Fellow of Oriel. But more to be valued than all prizes and preferments was the privilege to be at Oriel in the earlier years of colleagues and companions like Dean Church, Bishop Fraser, Professor Earle, Arthur Hugh Clough, Thomas Hughes, Principal Shairp, Chief Justice Coleridge, the Froudes, and, not least, to have heard —

"The voice that weekly from St. Mary's spake,  
As from the unseen world oracular,  
Strong as another Wesley, to re-wake  
The sluggish heart of England, near and far;  
Voice so intense to win men or repel,  
Piercing yet tender, on these spirits fell,  
Making them other, higher than they were."

These were the days, too, that saw this future Cardinal Newman secede to the Church of Rome, and Arthur Hugh Clough take his leave of academic life to seek —

“The mountain top where is the throne of truth.  
It irked him to be here; he could not rest.  
He loved each simple joy the country yields;  
He loved his mates; but yet he could not keep,  
For that a shadow lowered on the fields.  
Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep,  
Some life of men unblest  
He knew, which made him droop, and filled his head.”  
— *Thyrsis*.

He never came back —

“To cut a smoother reed,  
And blow a strain the world at last shall heed;”

but he remained long enough to affect the life of the few that, like Matthew Arnold, knew him, with a sympathetic charm never to be dissolved. Yet that which had “irked” Clough, the scholar-gypsy, was peculiarly grateful to Arnold, the scholar-poet, and is immortalized by many a beautiful tribute in his prose and poetry. Nowhere are these memories more nobly enshrined than in the close of the Preface to the first series of essays, where he says, “Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene.

‘There are our young barbarians, all at play!’

And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers

the last enchantments of the middle age, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection, to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side? nearer, perhaps, than all the science of Tübingen. Adorable dreamer! whose heart has been so romantic, who hast given thyself so prodigally, given thyself to sides and to heroes not mine, only never to the Philistines! Home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties! Apparitions of a day, what is our puny warfare against the Philistines, compared with the warfare which this queen of romance has been waging against them for centuries, and will wage after we are gone?"

Oxford did, indeed, "by her ineffable charm" call the young poet nearer to the true goal than did any of the preferments and honors that awaited his later life. It was here that he began his distinctive literary career, not as the apostle of pure criticism, but as a poet of "purest ray serene." How profoundly he felt the influences of his academic life, — as an undergraduate, as a fellow, as the professor of English poetry, — is seen from the fact that he never could understand the men that —

" Eddy about,  
Here and there; eat and drink,  
Chatter and love and hate,  
Gather and squander, are raised  
Aloft, are hurled in the dust,  
Striving blindly, achieving  
Nothing; and then they die —



Perish; and no one asks  
Who or what they have been,  
More than he asks what waves  
In the moonlit solitudes, mild,  
Of the midmost ocean, have swelled,  
Foamed for a moment, and gone."

Mr. Arnold had, in 1847, removed from Oxford to become private secretary of Lord Lansdowne. In 1851, an official appointment gave him life-long identification with the educational interests of England as an Inspector of Public Schools. No notes are more intensely interesting, in the sketch of a life, than those that are purely autobiographical, and this passage illustrates not so much what it intended, the good school inspector, as the warm-hearted, sympathetic, all-around man. It is an extract from the speech made at his retirement from the Inspectorship: "I do not think I have been altogether a bad inspector. I think I have had two qualifications for the post. One is that of having a serious sense of the nature and function of criticism. I from the first sought to see the schools as they really were. Thus it was soon felt that I was fair, and that the teachers had not to apprehend from me crotchets, pedantries, humors, favoritisms, and prejudices. That was one qualification. Another was that I got the habit, very early in my time, of trying to put myself in the place of the teachers whom I was inspecting. I will tell you how that came about. Though I am a schoolmaster's son, I confess that school teaching or school inspecting is not the line of life I should naturally have chosen. I adopted it in order to marry a lady

who is here to-night, and who feels your kindness as warmly and gratefully as I do. My wife and I had a wandering life of it at first. There were but three lay inspectors for all England. My district went right across from Pembroke Dock to Great Yarmouth. We had no home. One of our children was born in a lodging at Derby, with a workhouse, if I recollect right, behind, and a penitentiary in front. But the irksomeness of my new duties was what I felt most, and during the first year or so this was sometimes almost insupportable. But I met daily in the schools with men and women discharging duties akin to mine, — duties as irksome as mine, — duties less well paid than mine; and I asked myself, are they on roses? Would not they by nature prefer, many of them, to go where they liked and do what they liked, instead of being shut up in school? I saw them making the best of it; I saw the cheerfulness and efficiency with which they did their work, and I asked myself again, how do they do it? Gradually it grew into a habit with me to put myself into their places, to try and enter into their feelings, to represent to myself their life; and, I assure you, I got many lessons from them. This placed me in sympathy with them. I will not accept all the praise you have given me, but I will accept this: I have been fair and have been sympathetic."

Meanwhile he was elected, in 1857, to the Chair of Poetry at Oxford, which he held until 1866. This date may be said to mark the dividing line between his poetry and prose work. The publication of his essays, travels on the Continent by state appointment in behalf

of education, and, finally, his lecture tour in America, occupied the remainder of his busy, useful, and honorable life. Edinburgh, Oxford, and Cambridge conferred upon him honorary degrees in recognition of his marked literary ability.

*Le cœur au métier* (the heart in the profession), a happy phrase, recalled to-day by his American hearers, is a bit of advice he had himself taken before offering it to his neighbors. His service to poetry, to criticism, to education, is of a character whose value will increase with the years. Those of us who are most honest in our convictions know that it was at the truth and not the severity of his unflattering criticisms of America that we took offence. His view of us, that we were a commercial people, whose enormous wealth could not compensate for our lack of ideality, made us angry because it was true; yet we should have been less disposed to indignation had Mr. Arnold been able also to recognize that our present condition was but a stage in a life which each generation sees bettered. Thus he would have not only informed but inspired and invigorated us.

Of his father he wrote in the poem of "Rugby Chapel":—

"Fifteen years have gone round  
Since thou arosest to tread,  
In the summer morning, the road  
Of death, at a call unforeseen,  
Sudden."

No more prophetic words could have heralded his own unanticipated departure, an event which transpired Sun-

day, April 15, 1888, at Liverpool, where he was temporarily the guest of a friend. So ended a life whose attainments embodied his own definition of a cultured man, as one "thoroughly versed in the best things that have been said or written," and whose manly fearlessness enabled him to tell the truth at the cost of personal popularity, with an assurance that future years will perhaps admire with the same zeal that contemporary years have disdained.

## FAMOUS EPISODES OF THE SHAH NAMEH.

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1. THE test of the sons of Feridoun.
2. The childhood of Zal.
3. The test of the wisdom of Zal, the father of Rustum.
4. The march of Kai Kaous to Mazinderin.
5. The seven labors of Rustum.
6. The defence of the white castle by the woman-warrior  
Gurdafrid. (A part of the episode of Sohrab and Rustum.)
7. SOHRAB AND RUSTUM.
8. The fiery ordeal of Saiawush.
9. The revenge of Kai Koshrau.
10. The passing of Kai Koshrau.
11. The fate of Isfendiyar.
12. The fall of Rustum.

## THE SHAH NAMEH.

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SOHRAB AND RUSTUM, the "tale replete with tears," is the finest episode of the Shah Nameh, or the Persian Book of Kings. The Shah Nameh is a poem of the heroic past, and bears the same relation to the Persian literature as the Iliad and Odyssey to the Greek, the Æneid to the Latin, the Nibelungen Lied to the German, and the Cid to the Spanish. As in all great epics, it is the story of the founding and development of a great nation. Rustum, like the Hercules of Greek mythology, and Siegfried of the Scandinavian, is the masterful hero of its exploits, and his name is to-day perpetuated in the East in the names of towns, in themes of popular romance and songs, and in oral tradition. The number of his exploits is less than that of Hercules, while their character is marked by the intrigue which belongs to the farther Orient. Rustum has a much less mythical character than Hercules, and the possibility of his improbable feats is increased by the continual presence and assistance of his wonderful horse Ruksh.

The scene of this epic is Central Asia, hence its very locality, with a conspicuous absence of seacoast and the impossibility of naval warfare, with its accompaniment

of life and colour, gives this poem a local atmosphere and environment peculiarly its own.

Despite this marked contrast, the student of comparative mythical histories would be delighted with the number of analogies to be found, first with other Oriental poems, and again with the epic poetry of the West. The motive of the Hildebrandslied, though representing a struggle between parental love and knightly honour, is strikingly similar; while one is continually reminded, in this and other tales of Rustum's exploits, of the tales of Charlemagne and the Arthurian Cycle. In the Persian epic, as in the Iliad, the steed of the hero plays a more important part than in the stories of the West, while in the Western stories, love of woman forms a more distinctive element, — a fact quite consistent with the Oriental and Occidental estimates of the sex. It was the easier task for Mr. Arnold to select a single episode for the theme of his exquisite poem, since the Shah Nameh lacks the unity of the Iliad or the Odyssey, and seems to the casual reader to be not unlike the *Morte d'Arthur*, a succession of exploits by various heroes. But as in Spenser's "*Faery Queen*," always the glorification of England, and ever the return of Arthur, are reiterated, so the glory of Iran and the triumphs of Rustum continually reappear in the Eastern epic. There is a marked likeness to the Greek epic, too, instanced by the death of Rustum; which, like that of Achilles, may be said to divide the poem into two parts.

The Shah Nameh, as written by Mansur ibn Ahmad, dates back scarcely a thousand years. This most re-

nowned of the Persian poets, a man of humble life in his native city of Tus, hearing that the King Mahmud desired that the history of the kings of Persia, which existed only in a collection of traditions and chronicles, should be preserved and immortalized in a rhythmical history, without the appointment or permission which had been conferred upon seven poets at court, wrote a portion of it with so marvellous a success that its fame soon reached the Sultan, who commanded him to his presence. Mahmud was so charmed with the skill and genius of the young poet, that he gave him the name Firdausi, the Paradisaical, by which he is known to literature, and made him the munificent offer of a gold piece for every distich he should compose until the work was completed. Firdausi, with a poet's inability to make a shrewd bargain, accepted the terms, but declined to receive any payment until the work was done; when, with a poet's generosity, he proposed to give the sum he had so nobly earned, to the protection, by dykes, of his native city, which he had seen again and again despoiled by the annual floods. He added one to those whose misfortunes come by putting their trust in princes. After a labour of thirty years he presented to the Sultan his immortal work of sixty thousand distichs; but time and familiarity, and particularly the envy of a court favorite, had changed the mind of his sovereign. He sent the brave poet the number of pieces, to be sure, but in silver,—a transmutation which Firdausi resented with anger, threw away with disdain, and then fled the city to live and die in disappointment and exile. In



later years the Sultan, anxious to make reparation, and convinced that he had been unworthily influenced by court enemies of Firdausi, sent him the full tale of gold; but it was too late, for Firdausi was already dead. The poet's benevolent purpose, however, was fulfilled, and Firdausi's descendants saw the accomplishment of his wish, in the improvement of his native city; to which the generous poet, believing in the word of a king, had dedicated his gold.

To Firdausi's grave to-day there is a path well worn by the pilgrims who honor his name, —

“Who loved the ancient kings, and learned to see  
Their buried shapes in vision one by one,  
And wove their deeds in lovely minstrelsy.”

An English poet of our own time, Mr. Edmund W. Gosse, in charming verse has told the story of Firdausi's after fate, in the poem, “Firdausi in Exile,” too long to be quoted here entire, and too harmonious in its unity to be cited in part; but I venture a single one from the closing stanzas: —

“His work was done; the palaces of kings  
Fade in long rains, and in loud earthquakes fall;  
The poem that a godlike poet sings  
Shines o'er his memory like a brazen wall;  
No suns may blast it, and no tempest wreck,  
Its periods ring above the trumpet's call,  
Wars and the tumult of the sword may shake  
And may eclipse it, — it survives them all.”

## THE STORY OF SOHRAB AND RUSTUM.

---

THE story of Sohrab and Rustum, as it has come to us through translation, is briefly this: Rustum, the Persian Hercules, during one of his adventures, becomes enamoured of a beautiful girl, the daughter of a petty king. The pair are wedded with all pomp and ceremony, but the restless Rustum, long before the birth of their first child, seeks new adventures. Thus he lives unaware that there is growing up, in the city of Samin-gan, a son inheriting all the valour of his father, and giving promise of equal renown in war. His fond mother, Tahmineh, when he demands his lineage, with frank pride assures him that he is the son of Rustum, who was the son of Zal, who was the son of Saum, who was the son of Neriman. She proves the truth of the story by showing him the jewels that his father sent at his birth, and explains to him that the onyx worn as an amulet on his arm is to be the seal of identification. Nevertheless, with a mother's solicitude, she begs him not to confess publicly this noble relationship, since Afrasiab, the leader in the land of Turan, is the sworn foe of Rustum his father, and the disclosure of his parentage would doubtless cost him his life. But the boy, like another Telemachus, sets himself to one task, the find-

ing of his valiant father, and proclaims without hesitation both his birth and his purpose. He assures his mother that he will conquer the whole kingdom of Iran (Persia) for Rustum; overthrow Kai Kaous, the reigning king; give his father the crown, and with him return to overthrow Afrasiab and reign himself over the land of Turan. Afrasiab willingly makes an alliance with so powerful an adherent, never dreaming his ultimate purpose. He also has a plan all his own. He instructs his warriors, as they lead the Tartar legions against the Persians, to conceal from Sohrab the fact that his father is the great hero of the enemy. He doubts not that Sohrab, in his young and fresh strength, will overcome the old warrior, spent with many battles, and in this event he, in turn, by some stratagem not yet determined upon, will destroy Sohrab, and thus join the kingdom of Persia to his own. Afrasiab unfolds his purpose by letter to Sohrab, and the united Tartar leaders march toward Persia. On the way Sohrab increases his renown by various conquests, until, by the time he reaches the land of Persia, the Persian leaders, Rustum among them, are full of interest as to the character of this new foe. There are two traditions which tell us how Rustum's heart was set at rest: the one, that he had been made to believe by the fond mother, anxious to retain her child at home, that their offspring was a girl; the other, that he was yet too young to be engaged in war. So it happened, that when the legions of Iran and of Turan were set against each other, Sohrab and Rustum, like David and Goliath, were made the representative

champions of their respective armies. The sense of kinship was strong in each, but fate was stronger than both, and after the single contest again and again renewed to prove the equal claims of heroic blood, it is only when Rustum's strength is supplemented by the supernatural power he has invoked, that he lays Sohrab low. Dying, Sohrab cries, "I went out to seek my father, for my mother had told me by what tokens I should know him, and I perish for longing after him. And now have my pains been fruitless, for it hath not been given unto me to look upon his face. Yet I say unto thee, if thou shouldst become a fish that swimmeth in the depths of the ocean, if thou shouldst change into a star that is concealed in the farthest heaven, my father would draw thee forth from thy hiding-place, and avenge my death upon thee, when he shall learn that the earth is become my bed. For my father is Rustum the Pehliva, and it shall be told unto him how that Sohrab his son perished in the quest after his face." Rustum demands, as a token, to be shown the jewel of onyx bound upon Sohrab's arm. Persuaded that he has been the unhappy murderer of his own child, his heart is made sick unto death, and he utters a lament not unlike that of David over his son Absalom. There follows in the story the pomp and circumstance of an Oriental burial. The mother lives a bitter year and dies of grief; but of Rustum it is said, that "it was long before he again held high his head."

## ARNOLD'S SOHRAB AND RUSTUM.

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THE possible discovery of an open Polar Sea has had a compelling charm for a certain type of heroic spirits. The intellectual frozen regions had to Mr. Arnold a supreme attraction. As Tennyson sets his sail ever toward tropical seas, as Browning makes the soul's voyage round the world, so Arnold, "bating not one jot of heart or hope," steers ever toward the north. There is, therefore, the more delight in turning from poems often boldly questioning the highest truths, and essays that challenge the foundations of oldest creeds, each too highly illuminated for the dim sight of his own generation, to the romantic poem of Sohrab and Rustum, with its utter freedom from chilling doubt, with its full-charged spirit of loyal family affection.

This poem is also one of few examples of his own doctrine of objectivity in poetry. While the narrative is taken from the great Persian epic, the strong treatment, the graphic pictures, the living action, the majestic movement, the sonorous rhythm, the exquisite choice of words, are Mr. Arnold's, and give us all that is best of his most subjective form in the midst of his most objective poem. Though sense of proportion, tranquillity, sincerity, and suggestion of reserve of power, character-

ize all the literary work of a poet who seemed to have adopted the Greek motto of moderation, "Do nothing too much," there resides in this poem a tenderness and warmth of nature whose art makes us forget its art.

Nevertheless, the ground tone is of the same consistent sadness that this apostle of a high ideal never failed to maintain, lightened and animated by a continual illustration of Mr. Ruskin's definition of poetry, "noble grounds for noble emotion." It contains that strong lyrical cry, the sweetness and gravity too great for melancholy; but it is free of "that something that infects the world," too frequent in many of Arnold's best poems.

"Sohrab and Rustum" is the fruit of long classical study, enriched by the most delicate appreciation of nature, — the certain result of Arnold's fidelity to Wordsworth. The outline, as Mr. Arnold relates it, is found substantially in Sir John Malcolm's "History of Persia," and Mr. James Atkinson's translation of the "Shah Nameh." The reader who invites himself to the more thorough study of the original, will observe occasional inconsistencies, or will regret the omission of beautiful passages, which are the obvious result of the use of the English translations; but in a history so combined with myth, fidelity to a tradition may be a matter of taste rather than of truth. The poem holds its highest merit and most endearing charm in that it centres not in the achievement of a transient conquest of one nation over another, but in the restoration of an enduring tie between a long-lost father and his son, — a simple story of

family life, that, like the *Odyssey* in relation to the *Iliad*, leaves an impression of domesticity rather than of nationality, of the "dim trouble of humanity," illustrated by one human relationship.

The poem is valuable to the student of literature, —

1. As a good fragmentary study of epic form, since it contains all the elements of epical power, and admirably complies with epic conditions: viz., *a.* it deals with a great past; *b.* it represents a single action, and concentrates it in a brief period; *c.* it possesses a noble hero; *d.* it contains the dramatic element of the dialogue; *e.* its greatness depends upon the action of the whole, rather than on any particular portion.

In fact, although an episode in an epic, like the "play within the play" in *Hamlet*, it is a little epic in a great one.

2. As an artistic study of local environment and colour among the steppes and nomad plains of Central Asia. A useful comparison can be made between the two encampments, their leaders, and especially the pictures involved in the long struggle between the champions of the field.

3. As a fine rhetorical study of figures, for their closeness to Homer, and so, in turn, to nature. The few instances given below could be easily multiplied: —

"As when some grey November morn the files,  
In marching order spread, of long-necked cranes  
Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes  
Of Elburz."

— *Sohrab and Rustum*, lines 111–113.

“Cranes, geese, or long-necked swans, here, there, proud of their  
pinions fly,  
And in their falls lay out such throats, that with their spiritful  
cry  
The meadow shrieks again.”

— *Iliad*, Chapman's trans., bk. ii., lines 395-397.

“Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,  
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws  
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf.”

— *Sohrab and Rustum*, lines 314-316.

“And as a poplar shot aloft, set by a river-side,  
In moist edge of a mighty fen, his head in curls implied,  
And all his body plain and smooth.”

— *Iliad*, Chapman's trans., bk. ii., lines 520-523.

“Sole, like some single tower, which a chief  
Hath builded on the waste in former years  
Against the robbers.”

— “*Sohrab and Rustum*, lines 337-339.

“He fell  
As falls a tower before some stubborn siege.”

— *Iliad*, Bryant's trans., bk. iv., lines 582-583.

“Whose fiery point now in his mail'd right-hand  
Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn-star,  
The baleful sign of fevers.”

— *Sohrab and Rustum*, lines 451-453.

“Upon his head  
And shield she caused a constant flame to play,  
Like to the autumnal star that shines in heaven  
Most brightly when new-bathed in ocean tides.”

— *Iliad*, Bryant's trans., bk. v., lines 4-7.



4. As a study of versification in the heroic form of iambic pentameter, distinct for its free movement, combined with stately form and variety in the use of the measure. As Mr. Arnold said of Milton, "In the sure and flawless perfection of his rhythm and diction, he is as admirable as Dante."

5. As a study of æsthetic loveliness characterized by simplicity on the one hand and Attic grace on the other. Here again he illustrates one of his favorite theories, by the avoidance of any ornamentation which is unnecessary to the beauty of the whole. Through the study here suggested, we find Matthew Arnold faithful to another of his poetic theories, — the duty, after selecting a subject, to fashion it symmetrically.

That Matthew Arnold should have chosen a theme like this for one of his earliest poems was a proof of his native poetic insight, before the study of Scriptures, theology, classic and modern history, politics, ethics, education, poetry and fiction had acquired for him the perfection of taste.

With a theme wisely chosen, symmetrically fashioned, freely treated, excellently sustained to its tragic close, we are disposed to believe that "Sohrab and Rustum," though not the most ambitious, is the best of Mr. Arnold's longer poems.

## AFTER READING ARNOLD'S SOHRAB AND RUSTUM.

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Who reads this measure, flowing strong and deep,  
It seems to him old Homer's voice he hears;  
But soon grows up a sound that moves to tears, —  
Tears such as Homer cannot make us weep,  
Whether a grieving god bids Death and Sleep  
Bear slain Sarpedon home unto his peers;  
Or gray-haired Priam, kneeling, full of tears,  
Seeks Hector's corse torn by the chariot's sweep.  
Lightly these sorrows move us, in compare  
With that which moves along the Oxus' tide,  
Where by his father's hand young Sohrab died, —  
Great father and great son met unaware,  
On Fate's dark field: in awe we leave them there,  
Wrapped in the mists that from the river glide.

EDITH M. THOMAS, in *Lyrics and Sonnets*, 1889.

# SOHRAB AND RUSTUM.

## AN EPISODE.

---

AND the first grey of morning fill'd the east,  
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.  
But all the Tartar camp along the stream  
Was hush'd, and still the men were plunged in sleep;  
Sohrab alone, he slept not; all night long 5  
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed;  
But when the grey dawn stole into his tent,  
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,  
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,  
And went abroad into the cold wet fog, 10  
Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.

Through the black Tartar tents he passed, which stood  
Clustering like bee-hives on the low flat strand  
Of Oxus, where the summer-floods o'erflow  
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere; 15  
Through the black tents he pass'd, o'er that low strand,  
And to a hillock came, a little back  
From the stream's brink — the spot where first a boat,  
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.

- 20 The men of former times had crown'd the top  
With a clay fort; but that was fall'n, and now  
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,  
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.  
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
- 25 Upon the thick piled carpets in the tent,  
And found the old man sleeping on his bed  
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.  
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step  
Was dull'd; for he slept light, an old man's sleep;
- 30 And he rose quickly on one arm, and said: —  
    'Who art thou? for it is not yet clear dawn.  
Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?'  
    But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said: —  
    'Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa! it is I.
- 35 The sun is not yet risen, and the foe  
Sleep; but I sleep not; all night long I lie  
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.  
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek  
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
- 40 In Samarcand, before the army march'd;  
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.  
Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan first  
I came among the Tartars and bore arms,  
I have still served Afrasiab well, and shown,
- 45 At my boy's years, the courage of a man.  
This too thou know'st, that while I still bear on  
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,  
And beat the Persians back on every field,  
I seek one man, one man, and one alone —

Rustum, my father; who I hoped should greet, 50  
Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field  
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.

So I long hoped, but him I never find.

Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.

Let the two armies rest to-day; but I 55

Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords

To meet me, man to man; if I prevail,

Rustum will surely hear it; if I fall —

Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.

Dim is the rumour of a common fight, 60

Where host meets host, and many names are sunk:

But of a single combat fame speaks clear.'

He spoke; and Peran-Wisa took the hand

Of the young man in his, and sigh'd, and said: —

'O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine! 65

Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,

And share the battle's common chance with us

Who love thee, but must press for ever first,

In single fight incurring single risk,

To find a father thou hast never seen? 70

That were far best, my son, to stay with us

Unmurmuring; in our tents, while it is war,

And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.

But, if this one desire indeed rules all,

To seek out Rustum — seek him not through fight! 75

Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,

O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!

But far hence seek him, for he is not here.

For now it is not as when I was young,

- 80 When Rustum was in front of every fray :  
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,  
In Seistan, with Zal, his father old.  
Whether that his own mighty strength at last  
Feels the abhorr'd approaches of old age ;  
85 Or in some quarrel with the Persian King.  
There go ! — Thou wilt not ? Yet my heart forebodes  
Danger or death awaits thee on this field.  
Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost  
To us ; fain therefore send thee hence, in peace  
90 To seek thy father, not seek single fights  
In vain ; — but who can keep the lion's cub  
From ravening, and who govern Rustum's son ?  
Go, I will grant thee what thy heart desires.'

- So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left  
95 His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay ;  
And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat  
He pass'd, and tied his sandals on his feet,  
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took  
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword ;  
100 And on his head he set his sheep-skin cap,  
Black, glossy, curl'd, the fleece of Kara-Kul ;  
And rais'd the curtain of his tent, and call'd  
His herald to his side, and went abroad.

- The sun by this had risen, and clear'd the fog  
105 From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands.  
And from their tents the Tartar horsemen filed  
Into the open plain ; so Haman bade —  
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa ruled  
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.

From their black tents, long files of horse, they stream'd ; 110  
As when some grey November morn the fies,  
In marching order spread, of long-necked cranes  
Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes  
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,  
Or some froze Caspian reed-bed, southward bound 115  
For the warm Persian sea-board — so they stream'd.  
The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,  
First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears ;  
Large men, large steeds ; who from Bokhara come  
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares. 120  
Next, the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,  
The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,  
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands ;  
Light men and on light steeds, who only drink  
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells. 125  
And then a swarm of wandering horst, who came  
From far and a more doubtful service own'd ;  
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks  
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards  
And close-set skull caps ; and those wilder hordes 130  
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,  
Kalmucks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes who stray  
Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,  
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere —  
These all filed out from camp into the plain. 135  
And on the other side the Persians form'd ; —  
First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seem'd,  
The Ilyats of Khorassan ; and behind,  
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,

- 140 Marshall'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel.  
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came,  
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,  
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.  
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
- 145 That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,  
He took his spear, and to the front he came,  
And cheek'd his ranks, and fix'd them where they stood.  
And the old Tartar came upon the sand  
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said: —
- 150 'Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear!  
Let there be truce between the hosts to-day.  
But choose a champion from the Persian lords  
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man.'
- As, in the country, on a morn in June,
- 155 When the dew glistens on the pearled ears,  
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy —  
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,  
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran  
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they loved.
- 160 But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool,  
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,  
That vast sky-neighboring mountain of milk snow;  
Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass  
Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,
- 165 Choked by the air, and scarce can they themselves  
Slake their parch'd throats with sugar'd mulberries —  
In single file they move, and stop their breath,  
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows —  
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.



And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up 170  
To counsel; Gudurz and Zoarrah came,  
And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host  
Second, and was the uncle of the King;  
These came and counsell'd, and then Gudurz said: —

‘Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up, 175  
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.  
He has the wild stag’s foot, the lion’s heart.  
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits  
And sullen, and has pitched his tents apart.  
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear 180  
The Tartar challenge, and this young man’s name;  
Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.  
Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up.’

So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and cried: —  
‘Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said! 185  
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man.’

He spake; and Peran-Wisa turn’d, and strode  
Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.  
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,  
And cross’d the camp which lay behind, and reach’d, 190  
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum’s tents.  
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,  
Just pitch’d; the high pavilion in the midst  
Was Rustum’s, and his men lay camp’d around.  
And Gudurz enter’d Rustum’s tent, and found 195  
Rustum; his morning meal was done, but still  
The-table stood before him, charged with food —  
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,  
And dark green melons; and there Rustum sate

- 200 Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist,  
And play'd with it; but Gudurz came and stood  
Before him; and he look'd, and saw him stand,  
And with a cry sprang up and dropp'd the bird,  
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said:—
- 205 'Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight.  
What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink.'  
But Gudurz stood in the tent-door, and said:—  
'Not now! a time will come to eat and drink,  
But not to-day; to-day has other needs.
- 210 The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze;  
For from the Tartars is a challenge brought  
To pick a champion from the Persian lords  
To fight their champion—and thou know'st his name—  
Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.
- 215 O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's!  
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart;  
And he is young, and Iran's chiefs are old,  
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.  
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose!'
- 220 He spoke; but Rustum answer'd, with a smile:—  
'Go to! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I  
Am older; if the young are weak, the King  
Errs strangely; for the King, for Kai Khosroo,  
Himself is young, and honors younger men,
- 225 And lets the aged moulder to their graves.  
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young—  
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.  
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?  
For would that I myself had such a son,

And not that one slight helpless girl I have — 230  
A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,  
And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zal,  
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,  
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,  
And he has none to guard his weak old age. 235  
There would I go, and hang my armour up,  
And with my great name fence that weak old man,  
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,  
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,  
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings, 240  
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more.'

He spoke, and smiled; and Gudurz made reply: —  
'What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,  
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks  
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks, 245  
Hidest thy face? Take heed lest men should say:  
*Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,  
And shuns to peril it with younger men.'*

And, greatly moved, then Rustum made reply: —  
'O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words? 250  
Thou knowest better words than this to say.  
What is one more, one less, obscure or famed,  
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?  
Are not they mortal, am not I myself?  
But who for men of nought would do great deeds? 255  
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame!  
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms;  
Let not men say of Rustum, he was match'd  
In single fight with any mortal man.'

- 260 He spoke, and frown'd; and Gudurz turn'd, and ran  
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy —  
Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.  
But Rustum strode to his tent-door, and call'd  
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
- 265 And clad himself in steel; the arms he chose  
Were plain, and on his shield was no device,  
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,  
And, from the fluted spine atop, a plume  
Of horse-hair waved, a scarlet horse-hair plume.
- 270 So arm'd, he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse,  
Followed him like a faithful hound at heel —  
Ruksh, whose renown was noised through all the earth,  
The horse whom Rustum on a foray once  
Did in Bokhara by the river find
- 275 A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,  
And rear'd him; a bright bay, with lofty crest,  
Dight with a saddle-cloth of broider'd green  
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were work'd  
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know.
- 280 So follow'd, Rustum left his tents, and cross'd  
The camp, and to the Persian host appear'd.  
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts  
Hail'd; but the Tartars knew not who he was.  
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
- 285 Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,  
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,  
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,  
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,  
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands —

So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came. 290  
And Rustum to the Persian front advanced,  
And Sohrab arm'd in Haman's tent, and came.  
And as afield the reapers cut a swath  
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,  
And on each side are squares of standing corn, 295  
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare —  
So on each side were squares of men, with spears  
Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.  
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast  
His eyes toward the Tartar tents, and saw 300  
Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came.

As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,  
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge  
Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire —  
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn, 305  
When the frost flowers the whiten'd window-panes —  
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts  
Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum eyed  
The unknown adventurous Youth, who from afar  
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth 310  
All the most valiant chiefs; long he perused  
His spirited air, and wonder'd who he was.  
For very young he seem'd, tenderly rear'd;  
Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,  
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws 315  
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,  
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound —  
So slender Sohrab seem'd, so softly rear'd.  
And a deep pity enter'd Rustum's soul

- 320 As he beheld him coming; and he stood,  
And beckon'd to him with his hand, and said: —  
    ‘O thou young man, the air of Heaven is soft,  
And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is cold!  
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.
- 325 Behold me! I am vast, and clad in iron,  
And tried: and I have stood on many a field  
Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe —  
Never was that field lost, or that foe saved.  
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?
- 330 Be govern'd! quit the Tartar host, and come  
To Iran, and be as my son to me,  
And fight beneath my banner till I die!  
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou.’  
    So he spake, mildly; Sohrab heard his voice,
- 335 The mighty voice of Rustum, and he saw  
His giant figure planted on the sand,  
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief  
Hath builded on the waste in former years  
Against the robbers; and he saw that head,
- 340 Streak'd with its first grey hairs; hope filled his soul,  
And he ran forward and embraced his knees,  
And clasp'd his hand within his own, and said: —  
    ‘O, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!  
Art thou not Rustum? speak! art thou not he?’
- 345 But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth.  
And turn'd away, and spake to his own soul: —  
    ‘Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean!  
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.  
For if I now confess this thing he asks,

And hide it not, but say : *Rustum is here!* 350  
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,  
But he will find some pretext not to fight,  
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,  
A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.  
And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall, 355  
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry :  
“ I challenged once, when the two armies camp'd  
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords  
To cope with me in single fight ; but they  
Shrank, only Rustum dared ; then he and I 360  
Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away.”  
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud ;  
Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me.’  
And then he turn'd, and sternly spake aloud : —  
‘ Rise ! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus 365  
Of Rustum ? I am here, whom thou hast call'd  
By challenge forth ; make good thy vaunt, or yield !  
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight ?  
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee !  
For well I know that did great Rustum stand 370  
Before thy face this day, and were reveal'd,  
There would be then no talk of fighting more.  
But being what I am, I tell thee this —  
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul :  
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt and yield, 375  
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds  
Bleach them, or Oxus, with his summer-floods,  
Oxus in summer wash them all away.’

He spoke ; and Sohrab answer'd, on his feet : —

- 380 'Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so!  
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.  
Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand  
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.  
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.
- 385 Begin! thou art more vast, more dread than I,  
And thou art proved, I know, and I am young —  
But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven.  
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure  
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.
- 390 For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,  
Poised on the top of a huge wave of fate,  
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.  
And whether it will heave us up to land,  
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
- 395 Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,  
We know not, and no search will make us know;  
Only the event will teach us in its hour.'
- He spoke, and Rustum answered not, but hurl'd  
His spear; down from the shoulder, down it came,
- 400 As on some partridge in the corn a hawk,  
That long has tower'd in the airy clouds,  
Drops like a plummet: Sohrab saw it come,  
And sprang aside, quick as a flash; the spear  
Hiss'd, and went quivering down into the sand,
- 405 Which it sent flying wide; — then Sohrab threw  
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield; sharp rang,  
The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear.  
And Rustum seized his club, which none but he  
Could wield; an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge,



Still rough — like those which men in treeless plains 410  
To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,  
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up  
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time  
Hath made in Himalayan forests wrack,  
And strewn the channels with torn boughs — so huge 415  
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck  
One stroke ; but again Sohrab sprang aside,  
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came  
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.  
And Rustum follow'd his own blow, and fell 420  
To his knees, and with his fingers clutched the sand ;  
And now might Sohrab have unsheathed his sword,  
And pierced the mighty Rustum while he lay  
Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with sand ;  
But he look'd on, and smiled, nor bared his sword, 425  
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said : —  
    ' Thou strik'st too hard ! that club of thine will float  
Upon the summer floods, and not my bones.  
But rise, and be not wroth ! not wroth am I ;  
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul. 430  
Thou says't, thou art not Rustum ; be it so !  
Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul ?  
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too —  
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,  
And heard their hollow roar of dying men ; 435  
But never was my heart thus touch'd before.  
Are they from Heaven, these softenings of the heart ?  
O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven !  
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,

- 440 And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,  
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,  
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.  
There are enough foes in the Persian host,  
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;  
445 Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou  
May'st fight; fight *them*, when they confront thy spear:  
But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!'

- He ceased, but while he spake, Rustum had risen,  
And stood erect, trembling with rage; his club  
450 He left to lie, but had regain'd his spear,  
Whose fiery point now in his mail'd right-hand  
Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn-star,  
The baleful sign of fevers; dust had soil'd  
His stately crest, and dimm'd his glittering arms.  
455 His breast heaved, his lips foam'd, and twice his voice  
Was choked with rage; at last these words broke way:—

- ‘Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!  
Curl'd minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!  
Fight, let me hear thy hateful voice no more!  
460 Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now  
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;  
But on the Oxus sands, and in the dance  
Of battle, and with me, who make no play  
Of war; I fight it out, and hand to hand.  
465 Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!  
Remember all thy valour; try thy feints  
And cunning! all the pity I had is gone;  
Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts  
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles.’

He spoke, and Sohrab kindled at his taunts, 470  
And he too drew his sword; at once they rush'd  
Together, as two eagles on one prey  
Come rushing down together from the clouds,  
One from the east, one from the west; their shields  
Dash'd with a clang together, and a din 475  
Rose, such as that the sinewy wood-cutters  
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,  
Of hewing axes, crashing trees — such blows  
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hail'd.  
And you would say that sun and stars took part 480  
In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud  
Grew suddenly in Heaven, and dark'd the sun  
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose  
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,  
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapp'd the pair. 485  
In gloom they twain were wrapp'd, and they alone;  
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand  
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,  
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.  
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes 490  
And labouring breath; first Rustum struck the shield  
Which Sohrab held stiff out; the steel-spiked spear  
Rent the tough plates, but fail'd to reach the skin,  
And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry groan.  
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm, 495  
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest  
He shore away, and that proud horse-hair plume,  
Never till now defiled, sank to the dust;  
And Rustum bow'd his head; but then the gloom

- 500 Grew blacker, thunder rumbled in the air,  
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh, the horse,  
Who stood at hand, utter'd a dreadful cry; —  
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar  
Of some pain'd desert-lion, who all day  
505 Has trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side,  
And comes at night to die upon the sand —  
The two hosts heard that cry. and quaked for fear,  
And Oxus curdled as it cross'd his stream.  
But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on,  
510 And struck again; and again Rustum bow'd  
His head; but this time all the blade, like glass,  
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,  
And in the hand the hilt remain'd alone.  
Then Rustum raised his head; his dreadful eyes  
515 Glared, and he shook on high his menacing spear,  
And shouted: *Rustum!* — Sohrab heard that shout,  
And shrank amazed: back he recoil'd one step,  
And scanned with blinking eyes the advancing form;  
And then he stood bewilder'd, and he dropp'd  
520 His covering shield, and the spear pierced his side.  
He reel'd, and staggering back, sank to the ground;  
And then the gloom dispersed, and the wind fell,  
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all  
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair; —  
525 Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,  
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.

Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began: —  
'Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill  
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,

And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent. 530

Or else that the great Rustum would come down  
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move  
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.

And then that all the Tartar host would praise  
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame, 535  
To glad thy father in his weak old age.

Fool, thou art slain, and by an unknown man!  
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be  
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old.'

And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied: — 540  
'Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.  
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!  
No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.

For were I match'd with ten such men as thee,  
And I were that which till to-day I was, 545  
They should be lying here, I standing there.

But that beloved name unnerved my arm —  
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,  
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield  
Fall; and thy spear transfix'd an unarm'd foe. 550

And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.  
But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear;  
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!  
My father, whom I seek through all the world,  
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee!' 555

As when some hunter in the spring hath found  
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,  
Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,  
And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,

- 560 And follow'd her to find her where she fell  
Far off; — anon her mate comes winging back  
From hunting, and a great way off describes  
His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks  
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
- 565 Circles above his eyry, with loud screams  
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she  
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,  
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,  
A heap of fluttering feathers — never more
- 570 Shall the lake glass her, flying over it;  
Never the black and dripping precipices  
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by —  
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss,  
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
- 575 Over his dying son, and knew him not.  
And with a cold, incredulous voice, he said: —  
'What prate is this of fathers and revenge?  
The mighty Rustum never had a son.'
- And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied: —
- 580 'Ah yes, he had! and that lost son am I.  
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,  
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,  
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;  
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
- 585 To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.  
Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son!  
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be?  
Oh, could I live till I that grief have seen!  
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,

My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells 590  
With that old king, her father, who grows gray  
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.  
Her most I pity, who no more will see  
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,  
With spoils and honour, when the war is done. 595  
But a dark rumour will be bruited up,  
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear ;  
And then will that defenceless woman learn  
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more ;  
But that in battle with a nameless foe, 600  
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain.'

He spoke ; and as he ceased, he wept aloud,  
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.  
He spoke ; but Rustum listen'd, plunged in thought.  
Nor did he yet believe it was his son 605  
Who spoke, although he call'd back names he knew ;  
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,  
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,  
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all —  
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear 610  
Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms.  
And so he deem'd that either Sohrab took,  
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son ;  
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.  
So deem'd he : yet he listen'd, plunged in thought ; 615  
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide  
Of the bright rocking Ocean sets to shore  
At the full moon ; tears gather'd in his eyes ;  
For he remember'd his own early youth

- 620 And all its bounding rapture ; as, at dawn,  
The shepherd from his mountain-lodge describes  
A far, bright city, smitten by the sun,  
Through many rolling clouds — so Rustum saw  
His youth ; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom ;
- 625 And that old king, her father, who loved well  
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child  
With joy ; and all the pleasant life they led,  
They three, in that long-distant summer-time —  
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
- 630 And hound, and morn on those delightful hills  
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that Youth,  
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,  
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,  
Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe
- 635 Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,  
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,  
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,  
On the mown, dying grass — so Sohrab lay,  
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
- 640 And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said : —  
‘ O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son  
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have loved !  
Yet thou errest, Sohrab, or else men  
Have told thee false — thou art not Rustum's son.
- 645 For Rustum had no son ; one child he had —  
But one — a girl ; who with her mother now  
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us —  
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war.’  
But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath ; for now



The anguish of the deep-fix'd spear grew fierce, 650  
And he desired to draw forth the steel,  
And let the blood flow free, and so to die —  
But first he would convince his stubborn foe ;  
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said : —

‘ Man, who art thou who dost deny my words ? 655  
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,  
And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine.  
I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm I bear  
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,  
That she might prick it on the babe she bore.’ 660

He spoke ; and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks,  
And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand  
Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,  
That the hard iron corslet clank'd aloud ;  
And to his heart he press'd the other hand, 665  
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said : —

‘ Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie !  
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son.’

Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed  
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm, 670  
And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points  
Prick'd ; as a cunning workman, in Pekin,  
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,  
An emperor's gift — at early morn he paints,  
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp 675  
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands —  
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd  
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.  
It was that griffin, which of old rear'd Zal,

680 Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,  
A helpless babe, among the mountain rocks ;  
Him that kind creature found, and rear'd and loved —  
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.

And Sohrab bared that image on his arm,  
685 And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes,  
And then he touch'd it with his hand and said : —  
    ' How say'st thou ? Is that sign the proper sign  
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's ? '

He spoke ; but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and stood  
690 Speechless ; and then he utter'd one sharp cry :  
    *O boy — thy father !* — and his voice choked there.  
And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,  
And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.

But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast  
695 His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,  
And with fond faltering fingers stroked his cheeks,  
Trying to call him back to life ; and life  
Came back to Rustum, and he oped his eyes,  
And they stood wide with horror ; and he seized  
700 In both his hands the dust which lay around,  
And threw it on his head, and smirch'd his hair, —  
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms ;  
And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,  
And his sobs choked him ; and he clutch'd his sword,  
705 To draw it, and for ever let life out.

But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,  
And with a soothing voice he spake, and said : —

    ' Father, forbear ! for I but meet to-day  
The doom which at my birth was written down

In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand. 710  
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,  
When first I saw thee ; and thy heart spoke too,  
I know it ! but fate trod these promptings down  
Under its iron heel ; fate, fate engaged  
The strife, and hurl'd me on my father's spear. 715  
But let us speak no more of this ! I find  
My father ; let me feel that I have found !  
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take  
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,  
And wash them with thy tears, and say : *My son !* 720  
Quick ! quick ! for numbered are my sands of life,  
And swift ; for like the lightning to this field  
I came, and like the wind I go away —  
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind ;  
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be.' 725

So said he, and his voice released the heart  
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth ; he cast  
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,  
And kiss'd him. And awe fell on both the hosts,  
When they saw Rustum's grief ; and Ruksh, the horse, 730  
With his head bowing to the ground and mane  
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe  
First to the one then to the other moved  
His head, as if inquiring what their grief  
Might mean ; and from his dark, compassionate eyes, 735  
The big warm tears roll'd down, and caked the sand.  
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said : —

‘ Ruksh, now thou grieveest ; but, O Ruksh, thy feet  
Should then have rotted on their nimble joints,

- 740 When first they bore thy master to this field !'  
But Sohrab look'd upon the horse, and said : —  
'Is this, then, Ruksh? How often, in past days,  
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed,  
My terrible father's terrible horse! and said,  
745 That I should one day find thy lord and thee.  
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane!  
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I;  
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,  
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home.  
750 And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan,  
And seen the river of Helmund, and the Lake  
Of Zirrah; and the aged Zal himself  
Has often stroked thy neck, and given thee food,  
Corn in a golden platter soaked with wine,  
755 And said: '*O Ruksh! bear Rustum well,*' — but I  
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,  
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,  
Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund stream;  
But lodged among my father's foes, and seen  
760 Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand,  
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,  
And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk  
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,  
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,  
765 The northern Sir; and this great Oxus stream,  
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die.'  
Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewail'd: —  
'Oh that its waves were flowing over me!  
Oh that I saw its grains of yellow silt

Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head ! ' 770

But, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied : —

' Desire not that, my father ! thou must live.

For some are born to do great deeds, and live,

As some are born to be obscured, and die.

Do thou the deeds I die too young to do, 775

And reap a second glory in thine age ;

Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.

But come ! thou seest this great host of men

Which follow me ; I pray thee, slay not these !

Let me intreat for them ; what have they done ? 780

They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star.

Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.

But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,

But carry me with thee to Seistan,

And place me on a bed, and mourn for me, 785

Thou, and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends.

And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,

And heap a stately mound above my bones,

And plant a far-seen pillar over all.

That so the passing horseman on the waste 790

May see my tomb a great way off, and cry :

*Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,*

*Whom his great father did in ignorance kill !*

And I be not forgotten in my grave.'

And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied : — 795

' Fear not ! as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,

So shall it be ; for I will burn my tents,

And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,

And carry thee away to Seistan,

- 800 And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,  
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.  
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,  
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,  
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,  
805 And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.  
And I will spare thy host; yea, let them go!  
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace!  
What should I do with slaying any more?  
For would that all whom I have ever slain  
810 Might be once more alive; my bitterest foes,  
And they who were call'd champions in their time,  
And through whose death I won that fame I have —  
And I were nothing but a common man,  
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown,  
815 So thou mightest live too, my son, my son!  
Or rather would that I, even I myself,  
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,  
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,  
Not thou of mine! and I might die, not thou;  
820 And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan;  
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine;  
And say: *O son, I weep thee not too sore,  
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thy end!*  
But now in blood and battles was my youth,  
825 And full of blood and battles is my age,  
And I shall never end this life of blood.'

Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied: —  
'A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man!  
But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now,

Not yet! but thou shalt have it on that day 830  
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,  
Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo  
Returning home over the salt blue sea,  
From laying thy dear master in his grave.'

And Rustum gazed in Sohrab's face, and said: — 835  
'Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea!  
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure.'

He spoke; and Sohrab smiled on him, and took  
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased  
His wound's imperious anguish; but the blood 840  
Came welling from the open gash, and life  
Flow'd with the stream; — all down his cold white side  
The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soil'd,  
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets,  
Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank, 845  
By children whom their nurses call with haste  
Indoors from the sun's eye; his head droop'd low,  
His limbs grew slack; motionless, white, he lay —  
White, with eyes closed; only when heavy gasps,  
Deep heavy gasps quivering through all his frame, 850  
Convulsed him back to life, he open'd them,  
And fixed them feebly on his father's face;  
Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs  
Unwillingly, the spirit fled away,  
Regretting the warm mansion which it left, 855  
And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world.

So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead;  
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak  
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.

- 860 As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd  
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear  
His house, now mid their broken flights of steps  
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side —  
So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.
- 865 And night came down over the solemn waste,  
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,  
And darken'd all; and a cold fog, with night,  
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,  
As of a great assembly loosed, and fires
- 870 Began to twinkle through the fog; for now  
Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal;  
The Persians took it on the open sands  
Southward, the Tartars by the river marge;  
And Rustum and his son were left alone.
- 875 But the majestic river floated on,  
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,  
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,  
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian waste,  
Under the solitary moon; — he flow'd
- 880 Right for the polar star, past Orgunjè,  
Brimming, and bright, and large; then sands begin  
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,  
And split his currents; that for many a league  
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along
- 885 Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles —  
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had  
In his high mountain-cradle in Pamere,  
A foil'd circuitous wanderer — till at last



The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide  
His luminous home of waters opens, bright 890  
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars  
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.



## INTRODUCTION TO NOTES.

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No one can read the poem of "Sohrab and Rustum" without being impressed with Mr. Arnold's knowledge of Hellenic and Hebraic literature. For this reason, the Notes will be found supplied with classical and Biblical illustrations. The Hebraic literature lends itself with special ease to the poem of "Sohrab and Rustum," for the fact, that, as the Israelites counted themselves the champions of Jehovah against the surrounding heathen, so the Iranians considered themselves the soldiers of Ormuzd against the Turanians, whom they believed to be under the evil power of Ahriman.

Such personages as are historical, and such geographical names as are yet of living interest, have been interpreted, but the aim has been to suggest lines of thought and methods of comparison, rather than to perfect them.

The story of Sohrab and Rustum is told in Sir John Malcolm's "History of Persia," as follows: "The young Sohrab was the fruit of one of Rustum's early amours. He had left his mother, and sought fame under the banners of Afrasiab, whose armies he commanded, and soon obtained a renown beyond that of all contemporary heroes but his father. He had carried death and dismay into the ranks of the Persians, and had terrified the boldest warriors of that country, before Rustum encountered him, which at last that hero resolved to do under a feigned name. They met three times. The first time they parted by mutual consent, though Sohrab had the advantage; the second, the youth obtained a victory, but granted life to his unknown father; the third was fatal to Sohrab, who, when writhing in the pangs of death, warned his conqueror to shun the vengeance that is inspired by parental woes,

and bade him dread the rage of the mighty Rustum, who must soon learn that he had slain his son Sohrab. These words, we are told, were as death to the aged hero; and, when he recovered from a trance, he called in despair for proofs of what Sohrab had said. The afflicted and dying youth tore open his mail, and showed his father a seal which his mother had placed on his arm when she discovered to him the secret of his birth, and bade him seek his father. The sight of his own signet rendered Rustum quite frantic; he cursed himself, attempting to put an end to his existence, and was only prevented by the efforts of his expiring son. After Sohrab's death, he burned his tents and all his goods, and carried the corpse to Seistan, where it was interred: the army of Turan was, agreeably to the last request of Sohrab, permitted to cross the Oxus unmolested. To reconcile us to the improbability of this tale, we are informed that Rustum could have no idea his son was in existence. The mother of Sohrab had written to him her child was a daughter, fearing to lose her darling infant if she revealed the truth; and Rustum, as before stated, fought under a feigned name, an usage not uncommon in the chivalrous combats of those days."

## NOTES.

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PAGE 25, LINE 1. **And.** The character of the poem as an episode is emphasized by this Scriptural use of the word, which opens a narrative when the connection with what goes before is not obvious. Cf. Ex. xxiv. 1; Num. i. 1. "And the Lord spake unto Moses," etc.

P. 25, l. 2. **The Oxus stream.** Now the Amoo Darya. Arnold accepts the tradition that it has always flowed into the Aral. Milton's "Paradise Lost," Book XI., l. 389:—

"And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's throne."

The introduction of the tranquil picture of the Oxus, both at the beginning and close of the poem (*vide* lines 875-892), flowing steadily on, unmoved by the tragedy which has been enacted on her shore, forms one of the most artistic features in the setting of the poem.

P. 25, l. 5-11. Cf. Shakespeare's "King Henry V.," Act IV., Scene I.

P. 25, l. 11. **Peran-Wisa.** A Turanian chief, ambitious, for political reasons, for the hand of the daughter of Afrasiab. The text of the "Shah Nameh" tells us that Sohrab from a height overlooked the tents of the enemy, while Hujir, his captive attendant, named the heroes who occupied them, much after the fashion of Helen with Priam at the gates of Troy.

P. 25, l. 13. **Clustering like beehives,** etc. This opening simile is a fair example of the general Homeric character of Mr. Arnold's figures. Like Homer's they are drawn from simple, natural objects. See pp. 21, 22.

P. 25, l. 15. **Pamere.** An elevated steppe in the region of the southern affluents of the Oxus.

P. 25, l. 16. **Through the black tents he pass'd.** Cf. line 12. This repetition belongs alike to the Homeric poetry, and to the correct form of art when it depicts nature. Cf. Ruskin's "Elements of Drawing," Letter III., On Color and Composition. Many other instances may be found in the poem.

PAGE 26, LINE 29. **For he slept light**, etc. Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," Act II., Scene III.:—

"Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye."

P. 26, l. 38. **King Afrasiab**. A lineal descendant of Tur, one of the three sons of Feridun. The Turanians perpetually invaded the more beautiful country of Iran, or Persia; and Afrasiab, reputed to have been as strong as a lion, with a shadow that extended miles, had been a particularly successful conqueror and usurper. At the period of the episode his power was on the wane, and the house of Zal was pledged to expel the tyrant from Persia.

P. 26, l. 40. **In Samarcand**. A city of Russian Turkestan, later celebrated as the capital of Timur's empire, and still a centre of Mohammedan learning.

P. 26, l. 42. **Ader-baijan**. The most northerly province of Persia, nearest Turania.

P. 26, l. 45. **At my boy's years**, etc. Cf. the interview of David and Saul. 1 Sam. xvii. 31-37.

Pp. 26, 27, l. 49, 50. **I seek one man**, etc. Cf. the interview of Menelaus and Telemachus, when Telemachus seeks Lacedæmon in quest of his father. Homer's "Odyssey," Book IV., Chapman's Translation:—

"And what, my young Ulyssean heroe,

Provoked thee on the broad back of the sea,

To visit Lacedæmon the divine?

Speak truth. Some public (cause) or only thine?

'I come,' said he, 'to hear, if any fame

Breathed of my father to thy notice came.'"

P. 27, l. 55-57. **But I**, etc. Cf. the challenge of Paris to Menelaus through Hector. "Iliad," Book III. Cf. also 1 Sam. xvii. 4-10.

P. 27, l. 59. **The dead . . . claim no kin**. This is the first of a succession of aphorisms, well worth attention, throughout the poem.

P. 27, l. 63-64. **And Peran-Wisa took the hand**, etc. This is an Occidental rather than an Oriental expression of sympathy, taken from the Greek.

P. 28, l. 82. **In Seistan with Zal, his father**, etc. Seistan is a province and lake of Afghanistan, named from the Sarghis, a kind of wood which abounds there.

Zal, "the aged," the son of Saum, and reputed to be descended from Benjamin the son of Jacob, was the father of Rustum. He had

the misfortune to be born with white hair, a colour odious to the Persians: and on this account he was exposed on the mountains to be befriended by the Simurgh, the bird of marvel, until his penitent father besought that he might be returned to his kingdom, which in his youth he administered with the wisdom of his premature silver locks.

PAGE 28, LINES 86-91. This sympathetic passage of solicitude on the part of Peran-Wisa for the son of Rustum is entirely Arnold's.

P. 28, l. 94-104. **So said he . . . went abroad.** This microscopic description of Peran-Wisa at his toilet somewhat justifies the criticism of "Blackwood's Magazine," Vol. LXXV., 1854. In fact, it is the only passage in this fine poem which drops entirely to prose.

P. 28, l. 101. **Kara-Kul.** A town of Bokhara, noted for its fleeces.

P. 28, l. 107. **Haman.** In the "Shah Nameh" he assists in the concealment from Sohrab of the presence of Rustum, his father, in the enemy's camp.

P. 29, l. 110-135. It is interesting to note the delight of poets in the introduction of long lists of musical, geographical names. Note the catalogue of ships in the "Iliad," Book II.; the list of learned medical men in Chaucer's "Prologue," lines 429-434; Adam's view of the world from the hill of Paradise, Milton's "Paradise Lost," Book XI., lines 379-411; and the names of Scottish haunts in Clough's "Bothie of Tober-Na-Vuolich."

P. 29, l. 113. **Casbin.** A fortified town of Persia.

P. 29, l. 114. **Elburz.** A range of mountains on the shore of the Caspian Sea.

P. 29, l. 115. **Frore.** Frozen.

"Parching air

Burns frore, and cold performs the effect of fire." — MILTON.

P. 29, l. 119. **Bokhara.** A city of Turkestan, traditionally founded by Alexander the Great.

P. 29, l. 120. **Khiva.** A desert province of Turkestan.

P. 29, l. 122, 123. **Tukas, etc.** Soldiers of various provinces of Turkestan, indicated by the rivers on whose shores they dwelt.

P. 29, l. 128. **Ferghana, or Khokan.** A province of Turkestan.

P. 29, l. 129. **Jaxartes.** A large river of Turkestan, rising, like the Oxus, in Pamere and flowing parallel with it to the Aral Sea.

PAGE 29, LINE 131. **Kipchak.** A town of independent Tartary near the Oxus.

P. 29, l. 132. **Kalmucks and unkempt Kuzzaks.** *Kalmucks*, a nomadic people of upper Asia. *Kuzzaks*, the ancient Cossacks, famous, like the modern Cossack, for military skill and horsemanship.

P. 29, l. 133. **Kirghizzes.** A violent and traitorous Mongolian tribe of Central Asia.

P. 29, l. 138. **Khorassan** — "Province of the sun." Including now a part of Afghanistan.

P. 30, l. 140. **Marshall'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel.** The Persian troops, in finer equipment, and under better discipline, are disposed of in five lines, with the lack of interest that usually pertains to greatly systematized bodies.

P. 30, l. 143. **And with his staff.** This primitive form of leadership is another Hebraic touch suggestive of Moses and his rod.

P. 30, l. 150-154. Cf. "And he [Goliath of Gath] stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, 'Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.'" — 1 SAM. xvii. 8.

P. 30, l. 160-169. This simile is based, as every one knows, on conditions that exist to-day, not only in the Caucasus, but also in the Alps, where travellers in certain places of peril are not allowed to speak for fear of dislodging an avalanche.

P. 31, l. 177. **He has the wild stag's foot.** The classical student will remember that a favorite epithet for Achilles is "the swift of foot."

P. 31, l. 178-183. **Aloof he sits.** Cf. Achilles sitting apart nursing his anger against Agamemnon. "Iliad," Book I.

P. 31, l. 188. **Squadrons.** A rare use of this word. Milton, also, says, —

"Those half-rounding guards,  
Just met, and closing, two in squadron joined."

P. 31, l. 192. **Of scarlet cloth,** etc. Cf. in effect of colour Peran-Wisa's "dome of laths" (line 23).

Pp. 31, 32, l. 199-204. **And there Rustum sat . . . and said.** Cf. with Achilles, who "drew solace from the music of a harp," to which he sang the deeds of heroes. "Iliad," Book IX.

NOTE. — Achilles also offers hospitalities which are accepted, not declined as in this case (lines 207, 208).



PAGE 32, LINE 205. The welcome and proffers of hospitality are strikingly Homeric.

P. 32, l. 217. **Iran's chiefs.** It must be borne in mind that Iran and Turan were the two brothers from whom the Persians and Turks sprang.

P. 32, l. 221. **Go to.** Hebraic expression. Cf. Gen. xi. 3, 4; Eccl. ii. 1; Isa. v. 5; James iv. 13; v. 1.

P. 32, l. 223. **Kai Khosroo.** A son of Saiawush and Ferangish, who lived to avenge the death of his father, Afrasiab's murdered victim, and, "with seeking what the foolish seek," became temporarily Shah of Persia.

"What have we to do  
With Kaikobad the Great or Kaikhosru?  
Let Zal and Rustum thunder as they will."

—RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM, *stanza 10.*

P. 32, l. 226. **Rustum he loves no more,** etc. Before the Shah had performed the victorious march into Persia, he had promised Zal that he would leave the kingdom to Rustum.

P. 33, l. 230. **And not that one.** *Vide* line 78, page 144.

Mr. Arnold here follows an early English translation which holds, that, in order that her son might not be taken from her to engage in war, Tahmineh had sent word to Rustum that the child was a daughter.

P. 33, l. 232. **The snow-hair'd Zal.** See line 82, page 28.

P. 33, l. 240. **And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings.** "Iliad," Bryant's Translation, Book IX. 389-398:—

"Nor deem I that the son  
Of Atreus or the other Greeks can move  
My settled purpose, since no thanks are paid  
To him who with the enemy maintains  
A constant battle: equal is the meed  
Of him who stands aloof and him who fights  
Manfully; both the coward and the brave  
Are held in equal honor, and they die  
An equal death—the idler and the man  
Of mighty deeds."

P. 34, l. 263-270. As in the prosaic toilet of the Tartar leader, Peran-Wisa, so in the arming of Rustum, there is little to praise. Possibly the superb picture of the arming of Achilles (Book XIX., Homer's "Iliad") made the critical poet falter: the caparisoning of Ruksh, which follows, is much more interesting.

PAGE 34, LINE 270. **And Ruksh his horse.** The story of Rustum and his horse is of itself a poem. The legend of Ruksh runs thus:—

Rustum, in his youth, seeking a steed of strength, tried many horses till he found among the flocks of Cabul a wonderful, masterless, rose-colored steed who would suffer no one to mount him, until Rustum, the predestinated master, appeared, of whom it was predicted that upon the back of Ruksh he should save the world.

Cf. the other famous horses in literature: as Xanthus, the horse of Achilles in the "Iliad;" Alfana, the horse of Gradosso in the "Orlando Furioso;" Aquiline, the steed of Raymond in "Jerusalem Delivered;" Babieca, the horse of the Cid.

P. 34, l. 277. **Dight.** Anglo-Saxon, *dibtan*, to set in order. Cf. Chaucer, "Knight's Tale," line 183. "Deck" has probably the same derivation.

"The clouds in thousand liveries dight."—MILTON'S "L'Allegro."

P. 34, l. 286. **Bahrein.** An island famous for its pearl fisheries.

P. 34, l. 288. **Having made up his tale, etc.** Anglo-Saxon, *italian*, to reckon. See also Ex. v. 8.

"And every shepherd tells his tale

Under the hawthorne in the dale."—MILTON'S "L'Allegro."

P. 35, l. 302. **As some rich woman.** The only simile that loses much by being unclassic, and bringing before the mind, in modern spirit, a modern drudge.

P. 35, l. 314. **Like some young cypress.** *Vide* Zimmer's "The Epic of Kings," p. 151.

"Now, when he had looked upon the boy, he saw that he was like to a tall cypress of good sap; and that his arms were sinewy and strong, like to the flanks of a camel; and that his stature was that of a hero."

P. 36, l. 321. **And beckon'd . . . with his hand.** A distinctly Teutonic idiom, illustrating Mr. Arnold's hereditary loyalty to German forms.

P. 36, l. 322-344. Here the text of the "Shah Nameh" is quite closely followed. It forms one of the finest pictures of the episode, in that the natural feeling of kinship fills the entire background.

P. 36, l. 328. **Never was that field lost or that foe saved.** An excellent example of powerful alliteration.

P. 36, l. 331. **To Iran and be as my son to me.** An undue number of monosyllables renders the scansion of this line nearly impossible.

PAGE 36, LINES 341, 342. **And he ran forward**, etc. Note the Homeric form of expression of sympathy, too frequent in the "Iliad" to need especial illustration.

Pp. 36, 37, l. 346-362. In the original text, Sohrab's opponent declares himself to be the slave or servant of Rustum.

P. 37, l. 376-379. **Or else thy bones . . . all away**. Cf. Milton's sonnet on the late massacre in Piedmont: —

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones  
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold."

P. 37, l. 379. **On his feet**. One of the very few instances in which Mr. Arnold finishes a line with "words! words!"

P. 38, l. 381. **I am no girl**, etc. Cf. "Julius Cæsar," Act I., Scene II. (Cassius): —

"Alas! it cried, 'Give me some drink, Titinius,  
As a sick girl.'"

P. 38, l. 387. **But yet success sways with the breath of heaven**. Cf. Addison's "Cato," Act I.: —

"'Tis not in mortals to command success.  
We will do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it."

P. 38, l. 400-402. This descent of the hawk veers from scientific fact, as the hawk approaches its prey with a slanting swoop.

Pp. 38, 39, l. 408-410. The club rather than the spear is much more appropriately the weapon of this primitive warfare. Cf. the club of Hercules; the club of Periphetes, the robber of Argolis: in "Paradise Lost," Satan's spear suggests but a club —

"to equal which the tallest pine  
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast  
Of some great admiral, were but a wand."

P. 39, l. 412. **Hyphasis or Hydaspes**. The modern Beas and Zhitum, rivers of India.

P. 39, l. 420-426. Another Hebraic picture. Cf. Saul in the power of David. 1 Sam. xxiv.

P. 39, l. 427, 428. An easy transposition would save the construction of these two lines from an amusing faultiness.

Pp. 39, 40, l. 430-447. "The lion knows the true prince;" so, also, perhaps, would the lion-hearted, although Mr. Arnold only intends the reiteration of the effect of a kinship felt but not known.

PAGE 39, LINE 431. **Have waded foremost**, etc. Cf. Shakespeare's "Macbeth," Act III., Scene IV.:—

"I am in blood  
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,  
Returning were as tedious as go o'er."

P. 40, l. 445. **Champions enough Afrasiab has**. As Haman and Barman.

P. 40, l. 458. **Minion**. Derived from the old High German *minne*, = love, and signifies a favorite, a servile dependant.

P. 41, l. 481-486. A distinctly Homeric imitation. Cf. the cloud that enveloped Paris, "Iliad," Book III., lines 465-469. See also Virgil's "Æneid," Book I., lines 497-499; also Spenser's "Faerie Queene," Book I., canto v., stanza 13.

P. 41, l. 489. **And the sun sparkled**. The clear stream of the Oxus gives intentional, pure relief at the most intense moment of the tragedy.

P. 42, l. 501, 502. **And Ruksh, the horse**, etc. The outcry of a sympathetic animal-servant is made much of in all old literatures. Cf. Balaam's ass, Num. xxii.; and Achilles steed, "Iliad," Book XIX., lines 393-403.

P. 42, l. 516. **And shouted: Rustum!** Cf. in Hebraic literature, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." — JUDGES vii. 18.

P. 42, l. 523-526. The most dramatic picture in the poem, before which the *dénouement* of most tragedies would pale.

Pp. 42, 43, l. 527-539. Cf. these words of triumph with those of Sohrab (lines 427-448), when Rustum was temporarily in his power, — the one the words of a victorious warrior, the other those of a filial son.

P. 43, l. 538. **Dearer to the red jackals**, etc. Cf. "Come to me and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field." — 1 SAM. xvii. 44.

Pp. 43, 44, l. 556-575. Here occurs the finest simile of the poem, unsurpassed in conception and sustained power in nineteenth-century literature.

P. 44, l. 569-570. **Never more shall the lake glass her**. Suggests —

"The swan upon St. Mary's Lake  
Floats double, swan and shadow."

— WORDSWORTH'S "Yarrow Unvisited."

PAGE 44, LINE 580. **Ah yes, he had,** etc. A weak line, especially when contrasted with the strong lines which have preceded.

P. 45, l. 590. **My mother who in Ader-baijan dwells.** Tahmineh, the Tartar princess, who wooed and won Rustum during one of his adventures on the border between Iran and Turan.

P. 45, l. 610-614. The acceptance of this less worthy tradition, with regard to the sex of Sohrab, gives Mr. Arnold several opportunities like this for strictly Arthurian passages.

P. 46, l. 625. **And that old king, her father.** The king of Samengan.

P. 46, l. 626. **His wandering guest.** Rustum, hunting the wild ass on the borders of the Turanians, had his horse Ruksh stolen from him. He entered the city of Samengan to demand his own, and was taken captive by the beauty of the king's daughter Tahmineh.

P. 46, l. 626-631. Poetic license, by which the time that Rustum passed in the kingdom of the Turanians is greatly extended.

P. 46, l. 639. **Lovely in death.** Young's "Night Thoughts," III., line 104:—

"Lovely in death the beauteous ruin lay;  
And if in death still lovely, lovelier there;  
Far lovelier! pity swells the tide of love."

P. 47, l. 658-660. **I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm,** etc. This form of tattoo is not justified by the text, which tells us that Sohrab wore an onyx stone as an amulet. This onyx incited the wearer to deeds of valor, like those performed by Neriman, his ancestor.

P. 47, l. 676. **Lights up his studious forehead,** etc. Cf. lines 85-90, Milton's "Il Penseroso;" also, "Hamlet," Act III., Scene I.:—

"Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

P. 47, l. 679. **It was that griffin,** etc. Simurgh, the bird of marvel, that fostered Zal when, on account of his white hair, he was rejected by his father, Saum.

P. 48, l. 691. **O boy, thy father!** This recognition in death is found also in the "Hildebrandlied," while Shakespeare uses it to illustrate the infinite sad confusions of the Wars of the Roses. See "Henry VI.," Part III., Act II., Scene V.

P. 48, l. 696. **Fond, faltering fingers.** Cf. line 669, "Weak, hasty fingers."

PAGE 48, LINE 706. **But Sohrab saw his thought.** Another Homeric phrasing. Bryant's "Odyssey," Book VI., lines 86, 87:—

"He perceived  
Her thought, and said."

P. 48, l. 709. **The doom which at my birth was written down.**

"Such is my destiny, such is the will of fortune.

It was decreed that I should perish by the hand of my father."

—SHĀH NĀMEH.

P. 49, l. 723, 724. **I came . . . passing wind.** "O remember that my life is wind." — JOB vii. 7.

"I came like a flash of lightning, and now I depart like the wind."

—SHĀH NĀMEH.

Pp. 49, 50, l. 737-740. **But Rustum chid him,** etc. Contrast the chiding of Xanthus by Achilles. "Iliad," XX., last ten lines.

P. 50, l. 742. Tradition says that Sohrab rode to this battle on a horse that was the colt that was sired by Ruksh.

P. 50, l. 751, 752. **Helmund.** A river of Afghanistan.

P. 50, l. 757. **Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan.** A Homeric memory of the "lofty halls" of Alcinous. "Odyssey," Book VIII.

P. 50, l. 763-765. **Moorghab.** A river of Afghanistan and Turk-estan, which, beyond the Merw, is lost in the sands.

—**Tejend, now Tedzen.** A river rising in the Persian province of Khorassan, and after two hundred and fifty miles is lost in the sands of the desert.

P. 51, l. 773, 774. Robert Browning, "La Saisiaz," line 199:—

"Fair or foul the lot apportioned life on earth, we bear alike."

P. 51, l. 779. **I pray thee slay not these.** Zimmern's "The Epic of Kings," page 167:—

"The sword of vengeance must slumber in the scabbard. Thou art now leader of the host; return, therefore, whence thou camest, and depart across the river ere many days have fallen. As for me, I will fight no more: yet neither will I speak unto thee again, for thou didst hide from my son the tokens of his father, of thine iniquity thou didst lead him into this pit."

P. 51, l. 788. **And heap a stately mound.** Persian tradition says that a rich monument shaped like a horse's hoof was placed above Sohrab.

PAGE 52, LINE 815. **So thou mightest live too, my son, my son!** Cf. "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"—2 SAM. xix. 4.

P. 52, l. 828. **Thou dreadful man.** The infrequent correct use of this word. Cf. "How dreadful is this place." GEN. xxviii. 17.

P. 53, l. 858. **And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak.** "Priam begging the body of Achilles" forms an excellent companion picture for its active passion contrasted with the passive despair of this.

P. 54, l. 868-871. Observe how natural life is resumed in the armies, and only to Rustum life and love are gone.

P. 54, l. 880. **Orgunjè.** A village on the Oxus, twenty miles north-east of Khiva.

Pp. 54, 55, l. 875-892. The last eighteen lines form a poetical "anodyne draught of oblivion" for the tragic ending, which, for artistic reasons, must have its redemption from pain. Peace after pain is the consummation of many of Mr. Arnold's verses.





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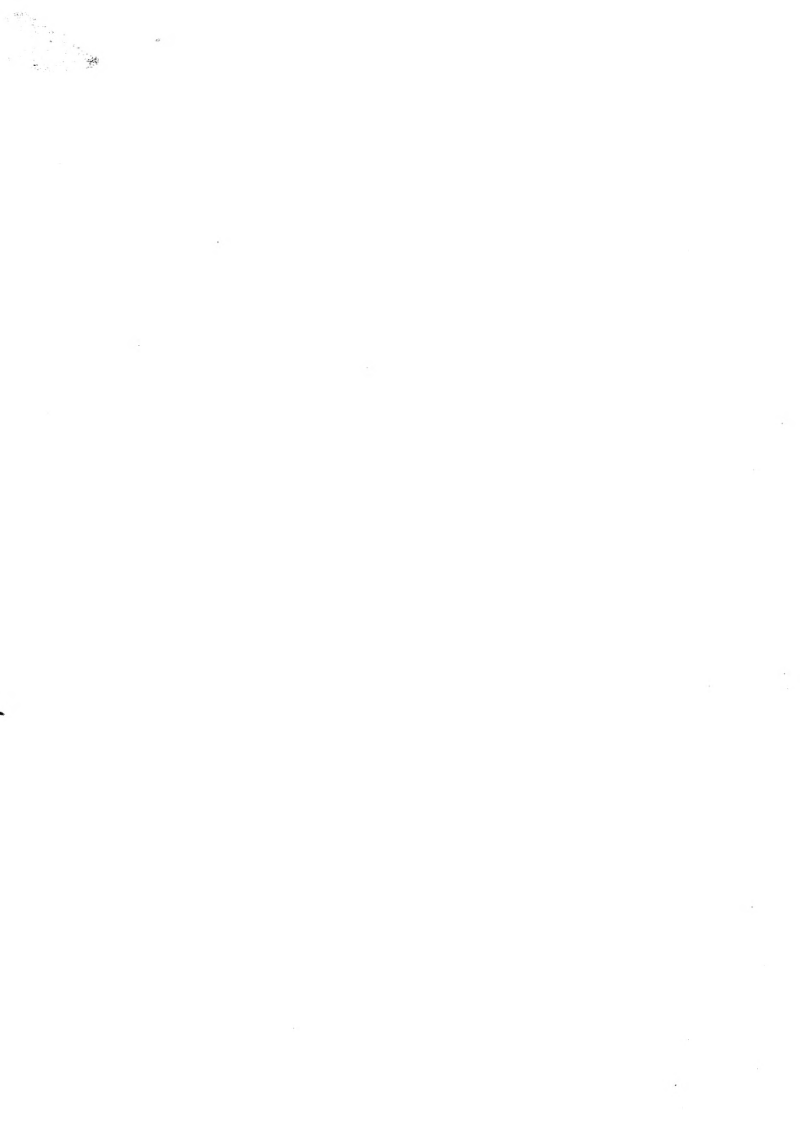
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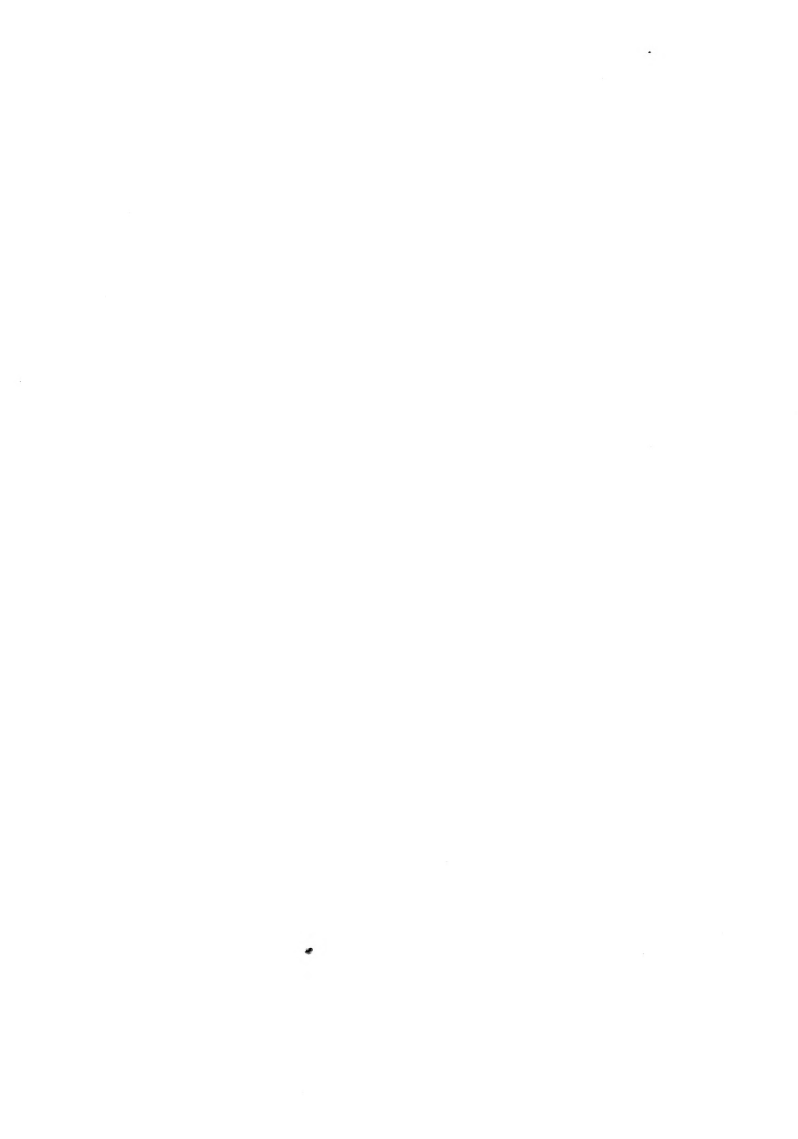
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